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April 4, 2012

Chair Ravel and Commissioners Eskovitz,
Garrett, Montgomery, and Rotunda
Fair Political Practices Commission
428 J Street, Suite 600
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Agenda Item 17: AB 1509 (Hayashi) – Internet Disclosure of Local Statement of Economic Interests– SUPPORT

Dear Chair Ravel and Commissioners,

On behalf of California Common Cause and our 400,000 national members, please accept this letter urging you to support Assembly Bill 1509, a bill that would require public disclosure of local officials' Statement of Economic Interests on city and county Internet Websites.

The Political Reform Act requires all public officials to file an annual Statement of Economic Interests (SEIs) which lists investments, income, and other economic assets to prevent conflicts of interests from arising when officials make decisions on behalf of the public. Statements of Economic Interests are available through public records requests to the Fair Political Practices Commission. However, the FPPC has recently begun proactively posting State elected officials' SEIs to save time and money from processing public requests. AB 1509 would require local governments follow the FPPC's example and proactively post SEIs for public scrutiny saving the voter's resources while increasing transparency and accountability.

SEIs have been essential to the FPPC and political watchdogs like Common Cause to identify or prevent officials from making decisions which are based on their personal economic interests and not on the needs of Californians. These economic interests can and do affect the policy choices of the public official. California voters deserve to have honest information regarding the economic interests of public decision makers to prevent government abuse and corruption. We urge you to use the staff's recommendation and support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Phillip Ung
Policy Advocate

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